



*To advance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Northern California  
by enhancing and preserving the water rights, supplies and water quality.*

## **The Sacramento Valley: Actions that Contribute to Regional Sustainability and a Successful Delta Plan**

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and Sacramento Valley water resources managers are aggressively proceeding with actions that contribute to both regional sustainability in the Sacramento Valley hydrologic region and a successful Delta Plan.

### **Regional Sustainability**

“The policy of the State of California is to reduce reliance on the Delta in meeting California’s future water supply needs through a statewide strategy of investing in improved regional water supplies, conservation and water use efficiency. Each region that depends on water from the Delta watershed shall improve its regional self-reliance for water through investment in water use efficiency, water recycling, advanced water technologies, local and regional water supply projects, and improved regional coordination of local and regional water supply efforts.” (Water Code §85021.)<sup>1</sup> NCWA and Sacramento Valley water resources managers are committed to advance the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the Sacramento Valley by enhancing and preserving its water rights, supplies, and water quality for the rich mosaic of farmlands, cities and rural communities, refuges and managed wetlands, and meandering rivers that support fisheries and wildlife. These water rights and supplies are essential for all three pillars of sustainability: the economy, environmental stewardship and social and community well-being; which--in the Sacramento Valley--are all closely integrated.

### **The Delta’s Co-Equal Goals**

The Delta Reform Act established the state policy to meet co-equal goals--a more reliable water supply for California (including the Sacramento Valley) and the sustainable management of the Delta ecosystem. (Water Code §85001(c).) NCWA recognizes that the Bay-Delta, like the Sacramento Valley, is an important economic and environmental resource benefiting all of California and the nation, and that there is much at stake in how one implements the numerous ecosystem restoration and water management actions that are under consideration. In this context, NCWA remains committed to work toward a successful resolution to the Delta’s complex environmental and water supply problems and to provide stability to the state’s water system.

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Sacramento Valley is implementing the Department of Water Resources’ April 2009 Sustainability Policy and the accompanying Environmental Stewardship Policy.



### **Independent Actions in the Sacramento Valley**

To implement these policies, Sacramento Valley water resources managers will continue to implement the following programs that are central to regional sustainability in the Sacramento Valley and are independent actions that will support the Delta Plan and contribute toward the achievement of the state's co-equal goals of water supply reliability and sustainable management of the Delta ecosystem:

- ***"Promote statewide water conservation, water use efficiency, and sustainable water use."*** (§§85020(d), 85303.) Sacramento Valley water resources managers are continually seeking improved water efficiency to achieve regional sustainability and to meet the various demands within the region. To further these efforts, NCWA has convened several renowned water management experts to better understand and portray the Sacramento Valley hydrologic region and to provide water resources managers with additional tools to promote efficient water management while enhancing regional sustainability. These experts are preparing a "Technical Report on Efficient Water Management for Regional Sustainability in the Sacramento Valley" that will describe the region and the opportunities for improved water management. Water resources managers will utilize this report to further explore and implement feasible projects to improve efficient water management to ensure regional sustainability and, in certain circumstances, to improve the Delta to the south. The report will also serve as a platform to invite interested parties to engage with these experts and water resource managers as part of an ongoing effort to improve water management in the Sacramento Valley.
- ***"Restore the Delta ecosystem, including its fisheries and wildlife."*** (§§85020(c), 85302.) Sacramento Valley water resources managers over the past several decades have formed various partnerships and invested hundreds of millions of dollars for ecosystem projects that provide "functional corridors for migratory species"--both aquatic (i.e., salmonids) and terrestrial (the Pacific Flyway). (§85302(c)(2).) These efforts have "reduced threats and stresses on the Delta ecosystem." (§85302(c)(4).) With respect to salmonids, these independent actions have all been advanced in partnership with the fisheries agencies to meet the goals in the National Marine Fisheries Service's October 2009 Draft Recovery Plan for Salmon and Steelhead. (§85302(c)(5).) To further explore opportunities to improve migratory corridors for salmon, NCWA has retained leading fisheries biologists to provide a scientific approach that will build upon the various efforts in the region. For the Pacific Flyway, these actions have all been part of the Central Valley Joint Habitat Venture Implementation Plan. We are also working closely with the California Rice Commission and numerous conservation partners, including the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, to improve habitat values along the Pacific Flyway.

Although the geographic scope of Delta Plan ecosystem projects are expressly focused in the Delta, the Delta Plan may recommend ecosystem projects outside the Delta that contribute to the achievement of the co-equal goals. We are committed to continue our ongoing independent actions to enhance conditions for aquatic and terrestrial species in the Sacramento Valley.

- ***"Improve water quality to protect human health and the environment consistent with achieving water quality objectives in the Delta."*** (§§85020(e), 85302 (d)(3).) Sacramento Valley water resources managers have partnered with federal and state agencies to assure that the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta water



quality objectives for the Sacramento River are met. In fact, these objectives have continually been achieved over the past several decades. Additionally, the California Rice Commission and Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, on behalf of farmers and wetlands managers throughout the region, have developed an aggressive "Regional Plan for Action" to improve and enhance water quality within the Sacramento Valley. These programs have comprehensive monitoring, management practices and outreach and they comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Irrigated Lands Program and various other regulatory programs, including TMDLs. Likewise, in urban areas, communities comply with waste discharge requirements and stormwater programs established by the SWRCB and the Regional Boards. These entities will continue to take action to improve and enhance water quality in the Sacramento River watershed.

- ***"Manage the water resources of the state over the long-term."*** (§85020(a).) Sacramento Valley water resources managers are actively managing the water resources in the region to assure the region will be sustainable with respect to water resources and the attendant benefits. This includes efforts to more actively manage the groundwater resources in the Sacramento Valley in conjunction with the surface water resources to assure the safe and sustainable long-term yield of groundwater aquifers.
- ***"Expand statewide water storage."*** (§§85020(f), 85034.) Public entities in the Sacramento Valley formed the Sites Project Authority (Authority) in August 2010 to advance water storage opportunities in the region. The Authority is partnering with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Bureau of Reclamation to thoroughly evaluate the feasibility of offstream storage at Sites Reservoir as a management tool to provide system flexibility and to make water available to meet the Delta's co-equal goals during critical times.
- ***"Reduce risks to people, property and state interests by...investments in flood protection."*** (§§85020(g), 85305-83507.) Flood protection entities have partnered with state and federal agencies for the past century to invest in public safety and protect the region against flooding that has ravaged the Valley and the Delta. These entities in the Sacramento Valley will continue to work with state and federal entities to provide public safety and to help implement the Central Valley Flood Control Plan.